



2018 ASSBI Brain Impairment Conference Report

The 41st Annual ASSBI Brain Impairment Conference was held in Adelaide South Australia at the Adelaide Hilton. The conference's theme "Connecting and collaborating in rehabilitation" was brought alive by everyone present.

We were privileged to have our conference space beautifully embraced by the art exhibition "This is Me", a personal and impressive collection of works by South Australian artists living with brain impairment who shared their visual and written expressions of their sense of who they are or the things that are important to them. Their images and stories ensured their voice held a clear presence through the conference and helped to create a personal, valued and positive connection with all those who shared in their exhibition.



Sample of the 27 artworks

The conference was a successful event with 303 registrants, 218 of whom travelled to Adelaide from all around Australia, and also from the UK, New Zealand, Canada, Hong Kong and Slovenia. 129 were welcomed as first time ASSBI conference attendees. The program involved plenary sessions from international and national keynote speakers along with the presentation of 48 platform papers, 34 datablitz papers and 22 posters. Given the successful 2017 introduction of 'How To' sessions (a 60 minute masterclass with expert practitioners), 6 sessions were included again as part of this year's program.



Day 1 involved the pre-conference half day workshops by the keynote speakers which were eagerly attended by registrants. In the morning, Professor Grahame Simpson presented his informative workshop "Understanding and building family resilience after brain injury". Unfortunately, due to unavoidable circumstances, Dr Tim Feeney was not able to travel to Australia and so his workshop "From Consumer to Producer: Rehabilitation as a Social Imperative" was cancelled, although his presentation slides were made available and he offered to speak with anyone who wished to contact him about them. In the afternoon Dr Caroline Ellis-Hill presented her interactive workshop "Working alongside people following brain injury: a 'hands on' exploration of human connection and sense of wellbeing" and Associate Professor Nicola Kayes engaged the attendees at her session "Co-creating health: supporting people to live well in the context of a neurological condition". There was a great deal of interest and enthusiasm before and after all the workshops, with ideas aplenty for further thought and application.

Day 1 finished with the Welcome Reception and launch of the “This is Me” exhibition, with 24 of the 27 exhibiting artists attending with their guests and sharing in the opportunity to meet each other and conference delegates and share their art and experiences. The exhibition was launched by Faith Thorley and Koruna Schmidt-Mumm, both talented South Australian artists and strong supporters of community endeavours, with Faith also being a PhD candidate exploring the value of her art in her own personal rehabilitation and well-being after ABI. The welcome reception was supported by our Corporate Partner Shine Lawyers and the artists and their guests were supported to attend the launch through the generous support of sponsors Henley and Grange Arts Studios, the Independent Arts Foundation (SA) Inc, Pro Health Care, Barbers of Mitcham and ASSBI. The evening was enthusiastically attended and enjoyed by all.



Faith Thorley



Koruna Schmidt-Mumm

Day 2 began with a personal and poignant Welcome to Country by Aunty Georgina Williams, Ngankiburka- Mekauwe, Kuarna Senior Woman, who helped create a connection to people and place for all present. Caleb Rixon, founder of Genyus Network, a peer support and storytelling network for survivors of trauma then helped to get the body of proceedings rolling with a dynamic presentation “Listen to the story, not just the statistics” sharing important personal insights and messages and bringing the voice of survivors of brain impairment to the fore for all delegates. This was followed by Dr Tim Feeney’s video address of his plenary session titled ‘What exactly is evidenced based practice? Finding evidence in our day to day work to support our work every day’ which was well received by delegates and helped to provoke much thought and discussion.



Caleb Rixon

The day continued with 4 concurrent sessions involving a range of interesting platform and datablitz presentations, covering themes related to understanding and meeting unmet needs, treatment and outcome considerations, working with children, and connecting through team practice. After lunch, delegates had the option of 3 informative ‘How To’ sessions across topics related to the ingredients that contribute to effective treatment of social cognition, tips and tools for developing the capacity of NDIS participants with ABI and the workforce they engage with, and the utility of brain neuroimaging in dementia- the good, the bad, the ugly.



Prof Grahame Simpson

Day 2’s program was well rounded by the plenary session where Professor Grahame Simpson presented his plenary address entitled “Building connections: Interventions to improve vocational, family and psychological outcomes after severe TBI”, providing an informative summary of current findings in his (and his team’s) impressive work around family resilience, spirituality, hope and return to work. Professor Jacinta Douglas followed with her ASSBI Presidential Address entitled “The things that help, the things that get in the way: Working together to improve outcome following acquired brain injury” highlighting the importance of connection, friendships and sense of self and the sobering challenges of isolation faced by those living with brain impairment.



Prof Jacinta Douglas

On behalf of convenor, A/Professor William Levak, Nicola Kayes also presented a taster of the exciting things to come for the 42nd ASSBI conference to be held in Wellington New Zealand, 2-4 May 2019. The conference theme will be ‘A Call for Action’.

Day 2 was capped off by a happy gathering for the student networking event in the Hilton lounge and then on to a delicious conference dinner at the Stamford Grand with 93 attendees who enjoyed the chance to catch up over a meal, relax and dance (with a commitment and enthusiasm that seems to be hallmark of ASSBI conference dinners!).





Dr Caroline Ellis-Hill

The conference's momentum continued into Day 3 and commenced with the plenary session during which Dr Caroline Ellis-Hill delivered her presentation "Lifeworld-led rehabilitation - a new approach to support psychosocial wellbeing following brain injury" followed by A/Professor Nicola Kayes' presentation "How do we do person-centredness? Building connectivity, trust, and capability in the midst of an unstable reality". Both presentations engaged the audience with new perspectives, thoughtful questions and important ideas.



A/Prof Nicola Kayes

The day then moved into a series of concurrent sessions before and after lunch, covering the following: understanding and meeting the needs of everyday living, pharmacological considerations in rehabilitation, working with people and their communication, connecting through relationships, understanding and meeting the needs of families, sensory and motor considerations in rehabilitation, working with electronic services and delivery, working with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and connecting services- criminal justice, health and disability. These were followed by 3 more valuable 'How To' sessions exploring cultural understanding and assessment amongst marginalised Australians, implementing and facilitating an effective memory group, and using an evidence based framework to guide support for decision making of adults with acquired cognitive and communication disability.

A lunch time student workshop was also provided by Professors Jennie Ponsford and Jacinta Douglas relating to general considerations for working with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) patients with brain impairments, and was much appreciated by those who attended.

ASSBI President, Professor Jacinta Douglas closed the conference, thanking all conference partners and presenting the following prizes:

The **ASSBI Early Career Clinical Innovation Award** which recognises innovation in the field of brain impairment was shared by: Rebecca Andrews for her work "Sexual and reproductive health initiative for women with complex acquired neurological disability", and Kate Gould (with Colin Brokenshire) for their work "From victim to survivor to advocate: neuropsychological intervention to enable recovery from an online dating scam after brain injury".

The **Douglas Tate Award** for the best research paper published in 2017 in ASSBI's journal *Brain Impairment* was also a shared award with the winners being Renee Roelofs for her paper Roelofs, R., Wingbermuehle, E., Egger, J., & Kessels, R. (2017). Social Cognitive Interventions in Neuropsychiatric Patients: A Meta-Analysis. *Brain Impairment*, 18(1), 138-173. doi:10.1017/BrImp.2016.31 and to Nicholas Ryan for his paper: Ryan, N., Mihaljevic, K., Beauchamp, M., Catroppa, C., Crossley, L., Hearps, S., . . . Anderson, V. (2017). Examining the Prospective Relationship between Family Affective Responsiveness and Theory of Mind in Chronic Paediatric Traumatic Brain Injury. *Brain Impairment*, 18(1), 88-101. doi:10.1017/BrImp.2016.20ASSBI

ASSBI Student Awards:

- The Kevin Walsh award for the most outstanding Masters student presentation was awarded to Kelly Stagg for her presentation "A scoping review of the working alliance in acquired brain injury rehabilitation".
- The Luria Award for the most outstanding doctoral candidate was awarded to Lee Cubis for his presentation "The importance of staying connected: mediating and moderating effects of social groups on psychological wellbeing after brain tumour".
- The Travel Award for student abstracts was awarded to Liz Williams for the submission "Getting on the same wavelength: Clinician's perspectives of the therapeutic alliance in community brain injury rehabilitation".

The **Mindlink Brightwater Award** for Interdisciplinary research was awarded to Dr Glenn Kelly for his presentation, "The Building Bridges project: Linking disconnected service networks in ABI and criminal justice".

Prizes were also awarded to Lee Cubis for being the top scorer on the Smartphone app and Jen Farden was the winner of the TV draw.

I would like to convey my heartfelt thanks to the many people who helped to bring this conference together, starting with a big 'thank you' to the Conference Organising and Scientific Program Committees for all their assistance to plan, organise, promote and run the conference. The Conference Organising Committee was comprised of Jacinta Douglas, Margaret Eagers, Cecily Nicholls, Brooke Harris, Natalia Kukumberg and Jane Mathias. The Scientific Program Committee involved myself and Jacinta Douglas as co-conference Chairs, Natalia Kukumberg, Jane Matthias, Michelle Bellon, Diana Dorstyn, Stacey George, Susan Hillier, Tamara Ownsworth, Jennie Ponsford, Clare Ramsden, Robyn Tate, Leanne Togher, Janet Wagland and Dana Wong. Thanks to all those from the committees who assisted with chairing sessions and to Lizzie Beadle for chairing a session and staying on top of all social media presence before and during the conference.

Next, I would like to thank the energetic and generous student volunteers Harriet Clayton, Tia Hardie, Zoe Lee, Demi Martin and Nayantara Nambiar who kindly gave of their time and were always on the ready to help with any request. Also to our Student Co-ordinator Anne Huang who worked the ASSBI stand and organised the Student Workshop and Student Networking evening.

I would like to thank Andrew Noble for his significant contribution in co-coordinating the art exhibition. With deep appreciation I wish to thank all the artists who contributed and shared their works and stories, along with their support people who helped to facilitate the process of getting the art works ready, particularly Hans Kreiner from Broughton Arts Society, Rebecca Popescu from Adelaide Art Therapy, Sandi Sando from Community Re-Entry Program, Therese Whebe from North East Networks, Yannoula Michael from Families4Families and the Brain Injury Rehabilitation Community and Home program. I would also like to thank Faith Thorley and Koruna Schmit-Mumm for launching the exhibition and members of my family who assisted with the exhibition. Further thanks to Luke Turner from Hampstead Rehabilitation Centre for hosting the exhibition post conference.

Thank you to our many generous conference partners and sponsors: corporate partner, Shine Lawyers; major partner, The Lifetime Support Authority; headline partner, the University of New South Wales, Sydney; conference partners, Drake Medox, ARC Centre of Excellence, Mellor Olsson Lawyers, Community Bridging Services; exhibition partners, Pearson Clinical Assessment, Australian Catholic University, One Rehabilitation Service, TabTimer, Brain Injury SA, AI Medical International, The Summer Foundation; Art Exhibition Partners, The Independent Arts Foundation (SA) Inc, Pro Health Care, Henley and Grange Arts Society, Eastwood Community Centre, Barbers of Mitcham; satchel insert partners Cambridge University Press, The Stroke Foundation, The Neuro Hub, Flinders University College of Nursing and Health Sciences and Cambridge Scholars Publishing, and also to the South Australian wineries Penfolds, Byrnes vineyards and Glen Ewin Estate for their kind donation of wines to assist with gifts.

I would also like to extend my thanks to the staff at the Adelaide Hilton for the lovely environment in which we were able to host the event, for the wonderful catering and prompt and reliable follow up for room set up and anything else we needed.

Of course, 1000 thanks and acknowledgement go to Margaret Eagers, Primary Conference Organiser for her enduring skill, professionalism, organisation and commitment to the conference, without whom the event could not happen. Thanks also to Graham Rickit for his calm and steady help to ensure things went smoothly.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to Jacinta Douglas and Margaret Eagers for their support, patience and expert guidance to help ensure the conference was a success.

In signing off, I would like to conclude with a 'thank you' to all those who presented their valuable work and to all delegates who wholeheartedly embraced the spirit of the conference. Wishing everyone positive and ongoing connections and collaborations!

I look forward to the 42nd annual Brain Impairment conference to be held in Wellington New Zealand, 2-4 May 2019. See you there!



Liz Williams

Convenor and Co-Chair